



U.S. Department of Justice

Brett L. Tolman

**United States Attorney
District of Utah**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 10, 2009**

**CONTACT: MELODIE RYDALCH
801-325-3206
801-243-6475 (CELL)**

**PRESS RELEASE
*FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS
WAKEFIELD OF ARMED
CREDIT UNION ROBBERY IN PROVO***

SALT LAKE CITY – A federal jury returned a guilty verdict Thursday afternoon convicting Ira Burdell Wakefield of a March 4, 2008, armed robbery of Utah First Credit Union in Provo. The guilty verdict, which followed about four hours of deliberation, concluded a trial that started Tuesday morning.

U.S. District Judge Ted Stewart set sentencing for Wakefield, 35, who has lived in Provo and Helper, for June 18, 2009. He faces up to 25 years in federal prison. A second defendant in the case, Christopher Noah Mollner, age 34, of American Fork reached a plea agreement with federal prosecutors in February. He pleaded guilty to one count of armed credit union robbery. He also faces up to 25 years in federal prison when he is sentenced May 12, 2009.

The case was investigated by the FBI, the Utah Highway Patrol, and the Provo Police Department.

According to Mollner's plea agreement and evidence presented at trial, Mollner and Wakefield planned a robbery of the credit union on March

4, 2008. On their way to commit to the robbery, Mollner said he and his accomplice purchased an air pistol, which closely resembles a 9 mm pistol, at a Walmart for Mollner to use during the robbery. Testimony at trial proved Wakefield was his accomplice. A short time later, the pair arrived at the credit union. Mollner entered the credit union, handed the teller a note demanding money and lifted up his shirt to show the teller the air pistol which was in the waistband of his pants.

The teller gave Mollner \$3,465 in currency. Mollner left the credit union and got into the front passenger seat of a van driven by Wakefield and they drove away.

Bank employees notified law enforcement of the robbery and officers began looking for the van. A Utah Highway Patrol trooper saw a van matching the description on SR-6 heading toward Price. Evidence from the bank robbery, including money and the air pistol, were found in the van.

Mollner and Wakefield remain in custody pending sentencing.

####